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Editorial

Take advantage of the disarray and widespread demoralization in the AFP

It is imperative for the revolutionary movement to take advantage of the intensifying and expanding disarray and demoralization within the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) due to the successive losses suffered by its soldiers this past month.

In Basilan and Sulu, AFP units are suffering major losses in the hands of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro people. Elsewhere in the country, the New People's Army (NPA) has likewise been inflicting heavy

casualties on the AFP.

The rank and file and junior officers of the AFP are indignant at how their high command has been using them as cannon fodder in the Arroyo regime's all-out war. They are doubly disgusted at the fact that the AFP is led by corrupt officials who line their pockets at the expense of the lives and welfare of foot soldiers.

The AFP's successive losses were bound to happen and are bound to worsen in the course of the unjust, fascist war being carried out by the Arroyo regime and the AFP against the Bangsa-moro and the rest of the Filipino people. More than a testimony to the skill and superior tactics of the guerrilla forces and their mastery of the terrain in their armed



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revolutionary resistance, their successive, consistent victories show the validity, justness and broad mass support enjoyed by their wars for self-determination and social liberation.

The ongoing all-out offensive operations of the AFP in Basilan and Sulu are being directed not so much against the minuscule Abu Sayyaf bandit group, as the regime and its military would have the public believe, but actually against the MILF and the MNLF. Despite the ongoing peace process between the reactionary government and the MILF and MNLF, the US-Arroyo regime is carrying out attacks against the Bangsamoro to weaken their resolve in the struggle for self-determination and assertion of their ancestral domain, sabotage the peace talks and peace agreement and force the revolutionary Moro forces to capitulate. The regime wishes to take away the victories of the Bangsamoro which they have won through several decades of revolutionary armed struggle.

More and more soldiers and their families as well as the in-

vaded Moro communities are acutely aware of the fact that the operations being carried out by the AFP in Basilan and Sulu are jeopardizing standing peace agreements with the Moro revolutionary forces and leading to the exacerbation of an all-out war against the Bangsamoro. More and more soldiers and their families, progressive and democratic forces, human rights proponents, peace advocates, civic and church sectors are one in demanding that the Arroyo regime revoke its all-out offensive against the MILF and MNLF.

The Arroyo regime remains adamant in carrying out its all-out offensive against the Moro people despite the major defeats its armed forces have suffered and the massive dislocation and hardships its war has caused to tens of thousands of families in Basilan and Sulu. Even as it goes through the motions of maintaining interest in the peace talks, it refuses to heed the clamor to actually put an end to the offensive, and has even deployed more than 5,000 additional troops to Basilan and Sulu.

In the face of the Arroyo regime's vile treachery and all-out belligerence, there is no other recourse for the Moro revolutionary forces but to strengthen their resolve and intensify their revolutionary armed resistance against the Arroyo regime. Even as they seek to salvage the peace negotiations that have been violated no end and preserve the gains they earned in the peace process, they must hold fast to their weapons in order to effectively carry out both defensive and offensive actions and repel the fascist onslaughts of the terrorist regime and its armed forces.


The revolutionary forces led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) express full support to the armed resistance of the Moro revolutionary forces of both the MILF and MNLF.

The CPP has issued instructions to all units of the New People's Army in Mindanao and across the country to launch tactical offensives to take advantage of the current disarray within the AFP and to cooperate with and extend support to the Moro people's armed resistance.

The deployment of thousands of troops from other regions to Basilan and Jolo leaves other Philippine Army units more thinly spread in NPA areas. The NPA can take advantage of this and launch tactical offensives against the weakened and isolated units of the AFP.

Tactical offensives must be carried out vigorously in all parts of the country in order to cause greater disarray within the AFP, further weaken and isolate the rotten, brutal, puppet regime, strengthen the people's army and revolutionary forces, and advance the people's war to a new and higher level.

In areas where operations of

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the NPA, MNLF and MILF share common areas, the revolutionary forces may carry out parallel or joint offensive operations against the AFP. It is important for the various revolutionary forces to unite, mutually support and assist each other to thoroughly resist and defeat the all-out offensive of the terrorist Arroyo regime.

At the same time, the CPP directs the NPA and all revolutionary forces under its leadership to take advantage of the heightened and widespread disarray and disenchantment within the AFP by intensifying organizing efforts among the rank and file and junior officers of the AFP. They are increasingly disgruntled with the leadership of the AFP and the Arroyo regime for their rottenness, corruption, brutality and puppetry.

The rank and file and junior officers of the AFP have become all the more disgusted with the Arroyo regime and its top generals in the face of the reckless and all-out offensive being carried out presently in Basilan and Sulu and the extrajudicial killings, abductions, torture, forced evacuations, food blockades and other inhuman and criminal acts of the AFP carried out in line with the Arroyo regime's Oplan Bantay Laya 2.

The revolutionary forces must directly and indirectly reach out to the rank and file and junior officers of the armed forces where they can to enlighten them on the basic problems of the Filipino people, encourage them to take a stand against the Arroyo regime and win them over to the side of the people's resistance and help the revolutionary cause. **AB**

Military offensives in Mindanao victimize 23,000 civilians

Up to 23,000 people have been forced to evacuate from various towns in Basilan and Sulu due to relentless AFP operations against armed Moro forces.

In Sulu, more than 2,700 families have already evacuated from the towns of Parang, Maimbung and Indanan. In Basilan, up to 1,800 families have been forced to leave their homes in the towns of Al Barka, Sumisip and Ungkaya Pukan. Most of the victims are children and elderly folk. They are seriously short of food and many of them have fallen ill.

The massive evacuations in Basilan and Sulu are the result of a large-scale offensive currently being launched by the AFP. Up to 5,000 soldiers had already been deployed to Sulu and 4,000 in Basilan in mid-August. It is estimated that up to P1 billion will be spent by the government monthly in its war in Mindanao.

The Moro people, especially the victims of the all-out war in Mindanao have roundly condemned the deployment by the regime of additional troops in Sulu and Basilan. Said MNLF interim vice chairman Hatimil Hasan, what Sulu needs is economic aid, not bullets, bombs and troops. Groups wishing to send aid to the affected areas, such as the Sulu Red Cross, likewise fear that many civilians would be caught in the crossfire, as what happened last August 9. The Moro people and the Bangsamoro Development Agency also condemned the order by Task Force Thunder under Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban to impose a food blockade in Basilan. **AB**

AFP suffers successive losses

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) suffered another serious blow from forces of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Moro National Liberation Front and other armed Moros. In the latest firefight in Ungkaya Pukan, Basilan on August 18, sixteen soldiers were killed, including five lieutenants from the Philippine Marines and one from the Philippine Air Force.

At around 6:30 a.m., elements from the 64th Force Reconnaissance Company and the Philippine Marines 31st Company attacked what they claimed to be an Abu Sayyaf camp in Sitio Kurellem, Barangay Silangkum. Thirteen Marines died on the spot and two more died in the hospital. Seventeen others were wounded on the side of the military. The firefight lasted until afternoon, with one of two MG-520 helicopters providing aerial support crashing, killing its pilot and injuring his two crewmen.

Despite the news blackout imposed since the AFP suffered major losses in Basilan, news managed to leak out that more than a hundred MILF fighters from the neighboring barrio of Bagindan came to reinforce their comrades. The military claimed that Nuridim Mudalam alias Commander Nor of the MILF was seriously wounded and killed in this battle.

It will be recalled that on July 10, MILF forces ambushed Philip-

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CPP assails American troops' presence in combat zone

The Communist Party of the Philippines severely criticized the direct intervention of American troops in ongoing military operations in Sulu this month.

Reports indicate that foreign troops are not simply joining patrols and combat operations. They actually direct military offensives. A reporter has, in fact, taken videos of US Special Forces aboard a Humvee leading a convoy of Filipino soldiers in Indanan, Sulu conducting operations against the Moro National Liberation Front.

Opposition senators and congressmen as well as elements from the broad anti-imperialist movement have also criticized the American troops' violation of the country's sovereignty. It is common knowledge that the Arroyo regime has concocted the war in Sulu and Basilan, to the detriment of the Moro people, to create a pretext for the continued presence of American troops and their leadership and direct intervention in local military operations.

American troops have long been deployed in Mindanao. Their intervention and direction of large-scale military operations in the Moro people's territories have also long been exposed.

Officials of the regime have also been compelled to admit this month the presence and ongoing operations in different areas in the country of agents of the US Central Intelligence Agency as well as other foreign intelligence groups. Their covert and dirty operations are directly linked to the combat operations being conducted by American troops in the Philippines. AB

VICTORIOUS NPA OFFENSIVES



NPA punishes notorious military unit

A unit under the Alejandro Lanaja Command (Front 3 Operations Command of the New People's Army [NPA] in Southern Mindanao) ambushed a military unit under the 72nd IB in Sitio Kidapang, Barangay San Isidro, Monkayo, Compostela Valley in the morning of August 10. The ambush was a punitive action on the 72nd IB for providing protection to Monkayo Mayor Manuel Brilantes' palm plantation. In a statement, Alejandro Lanaja Command spokesperson Ka Aris Francisco called the mayor a despotic local bureaucrat. He said the mayor uses his death squad and military forces to harass and kill peasants opposed to the expansion of his plantation.

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pine Marine troops in Al Barka town (formerly Tipo-Tipo). The AFP lost 14 soldiers and suffered an undetermined number of wounded. Almost a month after this incident, 27 Philippine Army soldiers were killed and nine wounded in a series of gunbattles with MNLF forces in Sulu from August 2-9.

Aware of the worsening demoralization in the rank and file, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV has called for an investigation by the Senate Committee on National Defense and Security on the successive losses suffered by the AFP in Basilan and Sulu. Through Senate Resolution No. 72 filed last August 14, Trillanes said he had received insi-

der information that high-ranking Malacañang officials used the Marines in Basilan as cannon fodder to come up with a pretext to launch all-out war against the MILF.

The former Philippine Navy officer and Magdalo spokesperson said at least five high-ranking officials were involved in the incident. Trillanes charged the Arroyo regime with trifling with the lives of soldiers and innocent civilians. Detained Philippine Marines commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda seconded Trillanes' view. He disclosed before the media that he and other officers knew who were responsible for the massacre in Basilan. Trillanes and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, head of the Senate Com-

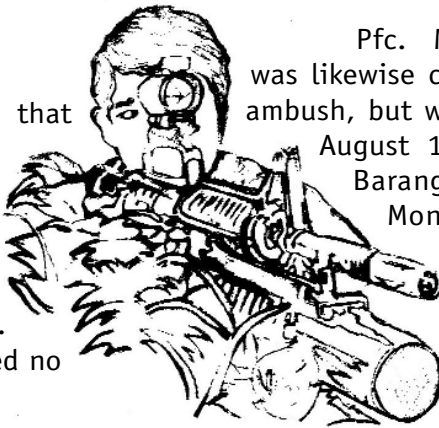
mittee on National Defense and Security have thus called for an investigation of the incident. The regime's immediate response was to block the probe and announce that it would bar AFP officers from attending the investigation. The regime has even had the gall to accuse Trillanes and Biazon of destabilizing the government.

In an attempt to ease demoralization and avoid severe criticism, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon has accepted full responsibility in his capacity as AFP chief. He nonetheless blamed the junior officers and their men for their losses. Esperon's statement has merely fanned the growing flames of demoralization spreading among the rank and file. AB



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Ka Aris announced that three paramilitary elements and a regular soldier were killed in the ambush. The NPA was also able to confiscate an M16 rifle. The Red fighters suffered no casualties.



Pfc. Marjun Gatela was likewise captured in the ambush, but was released on August 18 in Purok 9, Barangay Casoon, Monkayo after a court under the democratic people's government found that he had not been

involved in any serious crime.

Meanwhile, Red fighters seized four firearms of various caliber from Philco Mining Company in Barangay Camanlangan, New Bataan, Compostela Valley on August 14. Seized were an UZI submachine gun, a shotgun and two .357 revolvers. The tactical offensive served as punishment for the destruction caused by the mining firm's operations.

AB

NPA continues to frustrate Oplan Bantay Laya 2 in Bicol

The New People's Army (NPA) in the Bicol region continues to launch various armed actions to frustrate Oplan Bantay Laya 2. In a statement, the Romulo Jallores Command (RJC-NPA) in Bicol said the fascist AFP and PNP lost five men while seven others were wounded in three separate offensives launched between July 23 and August 5.

In Masbate. A team from the Jose Rapsing Command of the NPA in Masbate meted punishment last August 5 on P03 Joel Eser of the Pio V. Corpuz PNP.

Eser rabidly supported the AFP's counterrevolutionary war. Aside from serving as guide in anti-NPA operations, he actively established counterrevolutionary intelligence networks in barrios covered by Pio V. Corpuz town. He mulcted from small fisherfolk and on many instances, he beat up farmers. He was also a protector of various illegal activities of syndicates in Pio V. Corpuz.

The NPA seized from Eser two magazines filled with bullets for a .45 cal. pistol.

In Sorsogon. Two soldiers were killed and seven others wounded in an ambush by Red guerrillas of the Celso Minguez Command of the NPA in Sorsogon at around 8 p.m. in Barangay Agosara, Juban on July 30. Among the wounded was 2Lt. Jay Dumag, an officer of the 2nd IB.

Col. Muhamad Nur Askalani, 901st Bde chief said the troops who were aboard a private jeep had just come from a military operation in Magallanes town and were on their back to their camp in Barangay Aniog in Juban when they were ambushed by Red fighters.

In Camarines Sur. July 23, at around 4 p.m. an NPA squad encountered 31st IB troops in Barangay Alanao, Lupi. Two fascist soldiers were killed after a two-minute firefight. There were no casualties on the NPA side.

AB

Soldiers figure in misencounter in Masbate

Three soldiers were killed, four CAFGU elements were wounded and one other paramilitary element went missing after a misencounter between Scout Rangers on the one hand and combined forces of the 22nd IB and CAFGU on the other.

The NPA Jose Rapsing Command (JRC) has confirmed the misencounter that took place in Barangay Balete, Aroroy, Masbate last July 31, where Scout Rangers mistook 22nd IB and CAFGU forces on operation as Red fighters and immediately fired at them.

The JRC said the misencounter was due to the serious demoralization and fear haunting the fascist troops as a result of the successive blows inflicted on them by the NPA.

As usual, the 901st Brigade and 9th Division command concealed the incident to avoid embarrassment. Nonetheless, a radio station came to know about the misencounter from reports given by witnesses. The AFP and PNP leadership in the region as well as spokesmen from the AFP Civil Relations Service all refused to issue statements to the media on the misencounter.

AB



Arroyo regime harasses 3 women leaders

The fascist Arroyo regime relentlessly harasses and suppresses the Filipino people. Gaining the most prominence this August was news about the surveillance and harassment of three officers of Gabriela Network USA. Three members of Anakpawis were also abducted in Zamboanga del Sur even as the regime stepped up repressive measures against the Moro people. In Samar, a death squad shot to death the brother of a suspected revolutionary leader.

August 19. A military death squad killed Romeo Sarmiento, head of the Department of Agriculture training center in Barangay Irawahan, Catubig, Northern Samar. Sarmiento was shot in cold blood right in the town center. He was the brother of Eduardo Sarmiento, whom the AFP claims to be a Communist Party cadre in Eastern Visayas. Though he was not involved in the revolutionary movement, Sarmiento was killed as part of a campaign of repression against families of suspected revolutionary leaders.

August 14. At least 100 Agta minorities and 20 settler families from Dingalan, Aurora are in dire need of food and medicines due to a military-imposed food blockade. The AFP has prohibited the entry of foodstuff and medicines despite a malaria outbreak among residents of Sitio Pinamaypayan and Sitio Malakawayan in Barangay Umiray, Dingalan on the outrageous pretext that the supplies might

end up with the New People's Army. Aid workers fear that many villagers may die if the military persists in blocking the entry of much-needed supplies.

August 5-16. The Arroyo regime has put three officers of Gabriela Network USA (GABNet) on its watchlist of alleged terrorists.

GABNet national chair Annalisa Enrile, famed writer Ninotchka Rosca and GABNet International Relations Officer Judith Mirkinson were in the country to attend the GABRIELA-sponsored Women's International Solidarity Affair in the Philippines (WISAP) when they learned that they had been put on the Department of Justice watchlist.

Enrile was barred from leaving the country last August 5. She was given the runaround by various government agencies when she sought to find out why there was a hold order against her. She, Rosca

and Mirkinson were again accosted at the airport on August 16 because of their alleged links to Al Qaeda. They were detained for 30 minutes at the airport before being allowed to take their flights.

GABRIELA has condemned the DOJ watchlist, saying it was an instrument to intimidate foreigners wishing to support the Filipino people's struggle.

August 3. Policemen arrested worker Karahudin Usman Talib in a shopping mall in Taguig City, claiming he was a "terrorist" and member of the Jemaa Islamiyah. Talib was presented to the media where he made a scripted confession that he was involved in plans to bomb bus terminals and shopping malls in Manila and Taguig.

Talib's lawyer Zainudin Malang denied the police's accusations and said that his client who hailed from Libutan, Maguindanao was working as a tricycle driver at the Maharlika Village while waiting for his documents to be processed so he could go abroad.

Talib was arrested with another Moro, Juenail Abdul, even without a corresponding arrest warrant, following provisions of the Human Security Act. Abdul remains missing.

That same day, police also arrested Emran Gumanod, Mohammad Cosain and Nashrudin Cambang, all residents of Maguindanao province, along with five others, including a number of minors. The arrests took place in Cota-



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NDFP files another case vs. Arroyo regime at UN

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) filed another case against the Arroyo government last August 10 in Geneva, Switzerland. Arroyo's officials are being made to account for the abduction of two NDFP consultants and one NDFP staff and his wife. The missing NDFP consultants are Leo Velasco, who was abducted in Cagayan de Oro City on February 19, 2007; and Cesar Batralo, who was seized in San Mateo, Rizal on December 21, 2006. NDFP staff member Federico Intise is believed to have been abducted with his wife Nelly in Gen. Santos City on October 26, 2006.

The case filed by the NDFP at the United Nations Working Group on Enforced Disappearances named as respondents Gloria Arroyo, AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, PNP chief Oscar Calderon, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

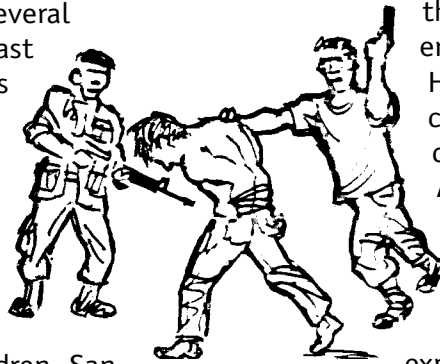
Velasco's daughter Lorena Santos is hopeful that her father is still alive and in the custody of the military. Assisted by Karapatan,

Santos went to several military camps last August 8. She was accompanied by Fr. Dionito Cabilas of Karapatan, Linda Cadapan and Lolita Robinos, who were also looking for their missing children. Santos was met by Lt. Col. Jack Baltazar of the Intelligence Service of

the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP). Baltazar denied having Velasco in custody but admitted that the ISAFP had an arrest order for him.

The first case filed by the NDFP at the UN involved the involuntary disappearance of NDFP consultants and staff Rogelio Calubad and his son Gabriel, Prudencio Calubid and his wife Celina Palma, Leopoldo Ancheta and another civilian, Gloria Soco.

NDFP negotiating panel chair Luis Jalandoni said, "It is a shame that the Arroyo government is in the UN Human Rights Council, even as UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, Amnesty International, among others, have exposed its gross violations of human rights of the Filipino people." AB



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bato City and Davao City. The victims have been accused of bombing the YBL bus terminal in Koronadal City last August 3.

Meanwhile, the Arroyo regime's henchmen abducted three Anakpawis members from Guipos town in Zamboanga del Sur last August 3. Antonino Roda, 39; Eric Buhain, 23; and Julius Sango, 21 have been missing for more than two weeks.

The victims were aboard a passenger van en route to Dingas town when they were abducted. Four armed men aboard a motorcycle blocked the van as it approached Barangay Balongating in Guipos.

Roda, Buhain and Sango along with two other women passengers were forced into a white van with five men aboard. AB

AFP refuses to release report on Jonas Burgos abduction

The military continues to refuse to disclose to the public the results of an AFP investigation on the involvement of soldiers in the abduction of Jonas Burgos on April 28. The presiding judge was irate at the failure of the provost marshal, Col. Arthur Abadilla, to attend a hearing on the case last August 13.

It will be recalled that Burgos was abducted by suspected AFP personnel using a Toyota Revo with plate number TAB 194. The plate number was later traced to a jeep seized by the military and impounded at the 56th IB camp in Bulacan.

Abadilla was ordered by the Court of Appeals eighth division to seek permission from AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. to disclose the report's contents. The military's insistence on concealing the report merely serves to expose before the public the fact that it is the AFP that is responsible for Jonas' abduction. AB

Medical tourism for foreigners who could afford to pay

Instead of addressing the longstanding problem of the lack of effective and adequate health services for the impoverished people, Gloria Arroyo's government prefers to service wealthy foreign patients. The regime's health programs are geared towards "medical tourism."

Medical tourism involves encouraging foreign patients to take advantage of so-called quality and affordable medical services and health care. Arroyo is keen on getting her hands on the estimated \$188 billion fund to be spent on the medical tourism industry worldwide between now and 2013.

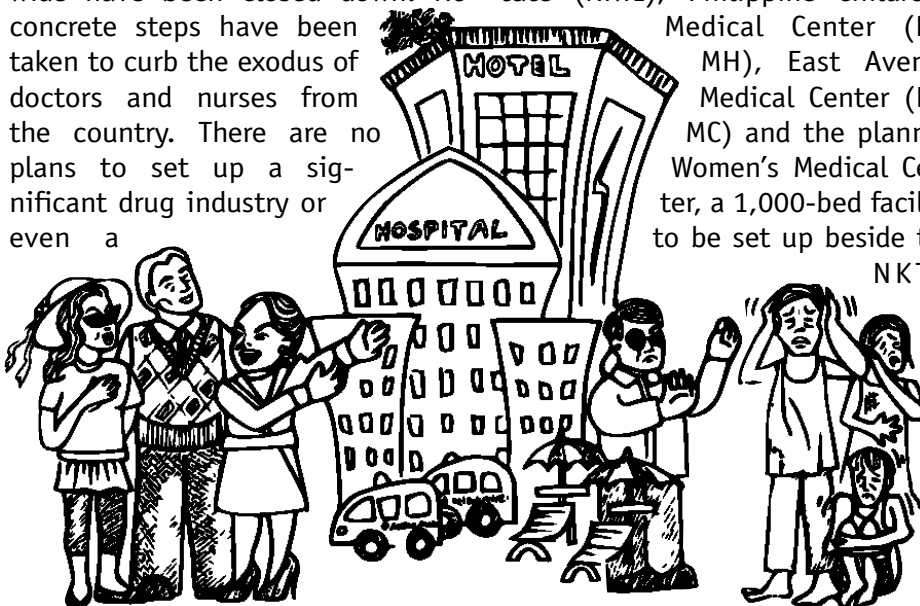
Arroyo wants to sell the Philippines as a country where foreigners can avail of cheap medical care. She intends to compete with India, Thailand and Singapore's medical tourism by offering medical services at even cheaper rates.

Medical tourism stands as a huge contradiction in the face of the regime's criminal negligence of medical services for the Filipino people. Public health services have gravely deteriorated under the Arroyo regime. Hospitals in many provinces, cities and towns nationwide have been closed down. No concrete steps have been taken to curb the exodus of doctors and nurses from the country. There are no plans to set up a significant drug industry or even a

viable project to reduce the prices of medicines.

Instead of addressing these issues, the regime is on a mad scramble to prepare the remaining major hospitals in the country to service foreigners. The Department of Health and Department of Tourism have been given their marching orders to prepare private and public hospitals for medical tourism. Nine out of 20 hospitals being eyed by the regime for the first phase of its medical tourism project are public hospitals.

The regime has long planned the establishment of the Philippine Centers for Specialized Healthcare (PCSH) that will integrate the resources and services of six public hospitals. It will comprise the Philippine Heart Center (PHC), Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP), National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi), Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMH), East Avenue Medical Center (EA-MC) and the planned Women's Medical Center, a 1,000-bed facility to be set up beside the NKTi.



The public Fabella Hospital will be closed down in line with the establishment of the Women's Medical Center.

Additional plans include the construction of a national Reference Laboratory for Degenerative Diseases; centers for diseases of the blood, brain, for cancer and for physical therapy and rehabilitation. The PCSH's construction is set to be finished by 2010.

The integration of these hospitals and the establishment of the PCSH is focused not on servicing poor Filipino patients for free but on servicing foreign patients who can afford to pay.

False progress. Arroyo's claim that medical tourism will improve the economy and alleviate poverty is a lie.

Arroyo claims that medical tourism will provide more jobs. The integration of the six hospitals is sure to result in massive layoffs and continuing threats to job security for ordinary health workers.

The only ones assured of raking in huge profits are the owners of big corporate hospitals. The pockets of high-ranking government officials tasked with overseeing the transformation of the main public hospitals will also be lined with gold. The only medical professionals assured of very high incomes would be those specializing

Public hospitals to offer medical tourism:

Philippine Heart Center
National Kidney and Transplant Institute
Lung Center of the Philippines
Philippine Children's Medical Center
East Avenue Medical Center
Amang Rodriguez Memorial Hospital
Quirino Memorial Medical Center
Pasig Medical Center
Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center

Source: DOH

in cosmetic surgery and high-end serious medical cases such as organ transplants.

Worse, medical tourism will further encourage the illegal trafficking of body organs like kidneys, livers, hearts and eyes. Feigning concern for organ transplant patients, the DOH in a recent statement called on organ donors not to demand high prices. The Arroyo government in fact wants the Philippines to be known as a cheap source of organs for sale (or the “organ-for-sale” capital of the world) as part of its attraction as a center for medical tourism.

Death of health services, death to poor patients. The absence of any plan to raise the budgets of the six hospitals due for integration compels these hospitals to train their sights on medical tourism as a means of augmenting their meager budgets.

Medical tourism will also further encourage small town doctors and nurses to transfer to big cities in Metro Cebu and Metro Manila. It will push doctors to specialize in fields needed for the medical tourism project instead of developing expertise in diseases suffered by the majority of the people.

The regime’s focus on medical tourism will make foreign patients the priority in hospitals. The presence of foreign patients who could afford to pay high fees for kidney transplants, for instance, will push poor Filipino transplant patients further down the waiting list.

With the integration of the six leading public hospitals, ordinary folk with medical problems will have nowhere to go. The focus on wealthy foreign patients will likewise drive the cost of medical care even higher especially in hospitals geared for medical tourism.

Any income that may accrue to the government from medical tourism will not result in better quality health care for the people. The regime has an unequivocal record of neglecting the health sector, with the proportion of the national budget devoted to health care going on a progressively downward spiral.

It is a shame that the Arroyo government chooses to focus on health care for wealthy foreigners when Filipinos are dying because they could not avail of medical services or get to the few remaining medical facilities on time. The Arroyo government will be using hospitals put up through the people’s taxes to serve wealthy foreigners. It has reached the height of its criminal neglect for the medical needs of the Filipino people. AB

Workers at Chiyoda win strike

The militant workers’ movement as well as government employees scored a number of significant victories in July and August.

Workers at the Chiyoda Integrated Philippines Incorporated, a Japanese-owned firm at the Light Industry and Science Park 1 (LISP 1) in Cabuyao, Laguna won their strike last August 3. The 36-hour strike was concluded when the LISP 1 management and officers of the Tunay at Lumalaban para sa Ikatatatag ng mga Manggagawa sa Chiyoda (TALIM-Chiyoda-Independent)-Kilusang Mayo Uno forged an agreement in a negotiation supervised by the National Conciliation and Mediation Board.

PAMANTIK (Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan) hailed the Chiyoda workers for their initial victory and reminded them to remain vigilant. The regional workers’ federation said that Chiyoda’s workers must struggle relentlessly to win complete victory in the face of the repressive and exploitative policies of imperialist globalization.

Among the workers’ demands carried in the agreement was the reinstatement with full backwages of 52 employees and a number of union members who had been dismissed; the adoption of a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) after the conduct of a certification election; and non-reprisal by either party.

Meanwhile, in Sasa, Davao City, the Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa Filipinas Port Services, Inc.-National Federation of Labor Unions-Kilusang Mayo Uno (NAMAFIL-NAFLU-KMU) won a certification election against two yellow unions last August 6 by a huge margin. The NAFLU-KMU in Southern Mindanao discovered that the night before the election, organizers of the Associated Labor Unions (ALU) had gathered 22 workers in a beach resort and tried to buy their votes for P100 each.

In Central Luzon, the Workers Alliance of Region III (WAR III) reported the adoption of a “collective negotiating agreement” (CNA) between the municipal government of Mabalacat, Pampanga and members of the Mabalacat Government Employees Association (MAGEA) on July 24. Mayor Marino Morales signed the CNA as representative of the local government. The CNA is the equivalent of the collective bargaining agreement for government employees.

MAGEA is the second union organized in Central Luzon among employees of the local government. The first—AGENDA (Association of Government Employees for a New Dynamic Angeles City)—was established in 2005 in Angeles City. AB

National minorities up against mining

NATIONAL minorities will wage all-out resistance to the entry of foreign mining companies, announced KAMP (Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas). KAMP, an organization advocating the rights of national minorities, said it would conduct continuous protest actions both legal and meta-legal and launched collectively or separately to stop the entry of giant foreign mining companies.

KAMP said it would hold the Arroyo regime responsible for all catastrophes that would be wrought by mining. It demanded the abrogation of contracts entered into by the regime with imperialist companies. It revealed that 18 of the 24 priority mining project sites are in ancestral lands: ten in Mindanao, six in the Cordillera and one each in Palawan and Mindoro.

KAMP also condemned human rights violations, including economic dislocation, the forced eviction of minorities from their territories and ethnocide against tribal communities. The national minorities criticized the Human Security Act, saying that “mining and antiterrorism laws, undeniably to be carried out in tandem, will result in legalized political repression, massive land grabbing, and even the killing of people who oppose Arroyo’s mining agenda.”

On August 13, people affected by the planned resumption of operations of Philex Mining Corporation in Benguet picketed the company’s office. They also blocked the entry of excavation equipment at the Philex’s open pit mine site.

Massacre in Iraq

SHIITE leaders condemned the US Army bombing last August 8 of an impoverished community in Sadr City, which lies east of Baghdad. Up to 30 people were killed in the attack, including children and women. Helicopter gunships manned by joint US and Iraqi forces started attacking the community at dawn, claiming the area was a lair for Iraqi guerrilla forces.

The desperate attack by American soldiers and Iraqi puppet troops was due to their failure to quell the Iraqi people’s continuing resistance. Guerrilla forces downed two US Army helicopter gunships—an Apache AH-64 in Al Gedida district on July 31 and a CH-58 D in southern Baghdad early this month.

300,000 firearms missing in Iraq

MORE than 300,000 assorted firearms and pieces of military equipment are missing from the inventory of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) as of July 2007. A US Congressional investigation revealed that firearms were being distributed loosely and that commanders could not be held accountable for the issuance of military equipment. Among the missing firearms are up to 110,000 Kalashnikov rifles and 90,000 pis-

tols.

Since 2003, the ISF has received more than 700,000 pieces of military equipment purchased through a \$2.8 billion budget for arms and equipment procurement. The amount forms part of the \$19.2 billion US allocation for the Iraqi Security Forces.

The US Department of Defense (DOD) is seeking from the US Congress an additional \$2.8 billion to purchase firearms for Iraq in 2008.

The DOD, however, was hard put explaining why there were missing firearms and military equipment. DOD officials claimed that successive commanders charged with purchasing and issuing military equipment failed to conduct proper inventories due to lack of personnel. Neither could the DOD retrieve all of the signed receipts because it was allegedly difficult for American soldiers to go to Iraqi police stations and military camps.